

Heroes by finnxwheeler

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Summary:

What goes through Mike Wheeler's head when Will's "body" is discovered.

Heroes

Author's Note:

The title comes from the song playing during this particular scene. We never really knew what was going through Mike's mind when Will's "body" was found, so I decided to fill in the blanks with my take!

Mike Wheeler's entire world came crashing down in a fiery heap within a few agonizing minutes.

At first, he was unsure that the body pulled from the quarry had been Will's. Eleven, the girl he, Dustin, and Lucas had found in the woods a couple of nights prior, had told them that Will was only hiding. He was alive. Maybe, just maybe, there was someone they didn't know had been missing, and it was their body instead. Word would have gotten around Hawkins, though, if it had someone else had gone missing locally. Even still, that was always possible...right?

But no. It hadn't been someone else, local or otherwise. Even from a distance, Mike could see Will's jacket-vest and the shirt he'd worn the night he left Mike's house. One of Mike's friends—he couldn't tell which in his shock—was saying that it really was Will. Mike could no longer hear anything but the shattering of his own heart and the anger that was pounding in his ears. His mind just shut down, his knees threatening to turn to jelly and cause him to collapse.

He remembered rounding on El and possibly shouting at her. He couldn't remember later what he'd said to her or if he actually did yell, and he also couldn't recall what Dustin and Lucas had said as he pulled his bike away and rode home. Mike just couldn't stay another minute and watch them bringing Will's body out of the water. Mike didn't want his final memory of Will to be of that moment. He wanted to remember Will as the tiny, adorable, wide-eyed boy that he'd known since they were young children. He wanted to remember the bright, shy kid that Mike had adored more than anything in this world. He wanted to remember Will as the boy who confessed that the roll had been a seven on the final night they saw each other. He wanted to hang onto the last words Will had spoken to him, saying

he would see Mike the very next day.

Only the next day never came, and there would be no more days for Will Byers ever again.

Mike's eyes were blurred with tears as he made the heartbreaking ride home. All he could think about was Will. All he could see was Will's smile, his eyes, and the way his hair was always messy and adorable when he woke up during sleepovers at the Wheeler home. He could hear Will's voice and laughter in his mind, so familiar and yet so foreign. For one painful second, Mike wondered if he would ever forget just how beautiful Will's laughter was, or how uplifting his voice had been. He sadly pondered the possibility that time may steal all of that away, just as Will himself had been so cruelly ripped from.

"No," Mike whispered to the empty night air, feet vigorously working the pedals of his bike. "No. Please don't take that away from me, too. You can't."

Mike could taste the tears as they fell down his cheeks and ran over his lips. He curled his lips inward as images of Will flooded his mind. He could see Will sitting at the table in the basement as they all played their weekly Dungeons & Dragons game. He could see the precious way in which Will would grin when he won. He remembered all the times Will would stare at him and look away when Mike would catch him. He saw Will blushing after being caught, and the flush darkening when Dustin teased them about liking each other. He could remember one instance when Will was laying on his stomach on Mike's bedroom floor, drawing one of the many amazing pictures he was so good at creating. Mike could vividly see how happy Will looked when it was finished and he handed it to Mike, a bashful grin plastered on his lips. Will was always so proud when he gave Mike some of his artwork, and it just melted Mike's heart every time.

One of the worst parts about Will's loss for Mike was that Mike had never told Will what he loved most about him. He hadn't shared that he thought Will was the cutest boy that Mike had ever seen, especially when he was happy and excited about something. He hadn't told Will just how much he loved the artwork. He never even

told Will that he also had a huge crush on him, just as Will seemingly had on him.

But now Will would never know any of that. Mike would never make new memories with him, because Will was gone. Will was dead.

Those three words running through his mind had been sobering, and Mike hadn't realized he was peddling into his driveway until he saw his parents' station wagon. Mike was devastated that Will was gone, he was frustrated with El for lying to him, and he was even starting to blame himself for Will's death. If only he'd gone with Will, if only he'd asked and talked to his mother into letting him ride with Will to ensure his safety...

It's all my fault, Mike thought as he opened his front door. Will is dead and it's all because of me.

He had tears flooding his cheeks and waiting in fat watery drops to fall from his eyes. He tried to hold himself together as he walked in and saw his mother, but he couldn't stop himself. He reached for her and just sobbed as Karen held him. He was releasing all of that anger and sadness, and he just let it pour out shamelessly. Karen clung to her son, confused at first, while Mike became lost in his own grief.

Mike just wanted the pain to stop and he wondered, for only a moment, if his mother would be able to help him. He wanted Karen to take all of his suffering and somehow just make it better.

Of course, that was absurd. This wasn't a scraped knee or a flimsy head cold. As much as Mike wished that it could, his mother's love and her hugs would never be able to mend his broken heart or fill in that gaping hole where Will was—is. Mike refused to think of Will in the past tense anymore, because Mike would always love, remember, and just cherish everything he had of Will's. He would hold onto those beautiful memories. He would smile every single time Will crossed his mind. He would admire every individual drawing that Will had ever given him.

Always.